THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The trained IAF pilots on ground assignments are against authorized posts which need to be manned by them in order to sustain combat potential of the IAF.

(c) Proposal for procurement of 126 Multi Role Combat Aircraft for the Air Force involves complex issues relating to transfer of technology, maintainability aspects, product support, determination of selection criteria etc., which required detailed consultation with different authorities.

Delay in procurement of aircrafts by Air Force

†1721. SHRI MANOHAR JOSHI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for which the Air Force has not been able to procure aircrafts despite according sanction by the Cabinet for procuring 126 fighter aircrafts for Air Force keeping in view decreasing fleet of fighter aircrafts;

(b) whether it is a fact that Air Force has not been able to procure these aircrafts because the Ministry of Defence has not yet prepared the RFP for sending the proposal for the same; and

(c) if so, by when the Ministry of Defence would prepare the RFP so that these aircrafts could be procured at the earliest?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) The procurement of 126 Medium Multi Role Combat Aircraft for the Air Force involves complex issues relating to transfer of technology, determination of selection criteria, product support etc. The parameters of the Request For Proposal (RFP) were approved by the Defence Acquisition Council at its meeting held on 29th June, 2007. The RFP is being finalized and is likely to be issued shortly.

Acquisition of tribal land around Ranchi airport

1722. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that about 1650 acres of mainly tribal land in and around present Ranchi Airport were requisitioned by the then British Government in India in 1942 temporarily for war purposes; and

(b) if so, whether these lands were returned to the original land owners after the war was over or are still occupied by the Ministry?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) Approximately 1121 acres of land was acquired for Ranchi Air Field during 1942-1944 and 1962-1964.

(b) Land measuring 8.88 acres was reconveyed to the State Government.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.